STEWARDSHIP OF SORROW

DOUGLASS SCARBOROUGH McDANIEL

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DOUGLASS SCARBOROUGH McDANIEL

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DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MY HUSBAND
GEORGE WHITE MCDANIEL

PREFACE

There is nothing new in this small volume. If you seek originality, pass it by, for

"We have gathered posies from other men's flowers,
And only the thread which binds them is ours!"

There is no claim of literary merit, for the art of books and book-making we have not learned! It is a simple expression of consolation for the suffering and the sorrowing. If any are helped or encouraged or consoled I shall have had my reward.

D. S. McD.

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER ONE
Sorrow is a Trust 11

CHAPTER TWO
Yet a Little While 17

CHAPTER THREE
Lost Sorrow 25

CHAPTER FOUR
All Ye Who Suffer 33

CHAPTER FIVE
The Fellowship of His Sufferings 45

CHAPTER SIX
Your Soul's Opportunity 51

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Grace of the Uplifted Face 59

CHAPTER EIGHT
Blessed Compensations 65

CHAPTER NINE
The Night Also is Thine 73

CHAPTER TEN
The Glory of the Morning 81

CHAPTER ONE

SORROW IS A TRUST

STEWARDSHIP OF SORROW

Steward am I of each sorrow
  Which a loving Father lent,—
If submissively I bear it,
  I'll not miss the lesson meant.
Steward only,—no, not owner,—
  Of this grief which wrings my heart.
He has loaned it, let me use it
  As the alchemist his art,
And transmute into a blessing
  What he has in wisdom sent,
That I may not dread to show him
  How this stewardship was spent!

(*Suggested by some lines of Strickland Gilliland.*)

CHAPTER ONE

SORROW IS A TRUST

It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. 1 CORINTHIANS 4: 2.

THE Christian world is hearing much today about stewardship. Once the term was considered as pertaining only to money, and having written our check we dismissed the matter from our thought as being fully discharged. A comprehensive study included what is more worth while, our time, our talents, our influence, and all that comprises our personality, which has been defined as one's attitude toward life. Character with all its accomplishments and graces is the result of gifts to us, either by inheritance or endowment. And since any personal achievement is only by means of these two original enduements by our parents or our Lord, there can be no room for pride or ground for claims of ownership.

Stewardship is our attitude towards God's gifts to us, and includes, as a climax, our sorrow which is indeed a trust from him. This is listed by the world as a liability but may become the soul's true asset. To shift it from one column to the other is not only the privilege, but the responsibility, of God's child.

Sorrow is a common trust. To each of us, including the children around our hearthstones, there will come life's portion of sadness. None of us wishes it; some of us may rebel against it, but all of us must accept it. Even if it has not already come to you, just ahead, or perhaps around the corner in your path, sorrow may join company with you. You cannot detour; there is no hope of evasion; sooner

or later, one by one, we must face our forlorn hour. But God and his upholding grace will be there, and with his help the inevitable may be changed into the inimitable. We should not spend any time dreading the sorrow which will come; days of repining and anxious premonition will only unfit us for the trial; we should rather pray now in these happy days for the Father's steadying power then, and for the poise which comes only from a sense of his presence. Gather all the strength possible from every joy which comes into your life and with a calm trust meet the hour when the cup of sorrow must be pressed to your lips; he will hold it; if, with a serenity born of close companionship with him you can say "Nevertheless, not my will!" the glory of submission and peace will fill your heart and songs of praise will burst from your lips.

There are some difficult lessons for us to learn, and one of the hardest is that, while our Father's nature is love, even for those who serve him most faithfully there is no immunity from trial. God has not promised us exemption from sorrow, but rather triumph in it. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Considering what is before us in that Blessed Beyond, should any child of God ever repine or be for an hour cast down? We live so far beneath our privileges!

Mrs. Browning's words are true:

"There is no God," the foolish saith,
But none "There is no sorrow;"
And Nature, oft in bitter need,
The cry of Faith will borrow;
Eyes which the preacher could not school
By wayside graves are raised—
And lips cry, "God, be pitiful,"
Which never said, "God be praised."

But there is a larger hope and a wider comfort for the Christian than that. To a saintly woman who had had many trials crowded into her life, someone said, "God must love you above most of us to trust you with so much sorrow." "Oh," she replied, "I hadn't thought about the trust, but I was sure all the time of his love."

Child of the Father, whoever you are, your sorrow, no matter what it is, is a trust; to think of it thus, will comfort your heart and glorify your Saviour.

O youth, with life's first laurels lost, and hand in hand with disappointment which looks now to you like disaster;

O somber-clad widow, standing alone in the first realization of the "house left unto you desolate;"

O grieving father, pierced by the serpent's tooth of a thankless son;

O sorrowing mother, weeping over the tiny white casket of your first-born, or at the bier of your beautiful daughter, a suicide;

O broken heart, outraged by the disloyalty of one you loved;

O distracted parents, sitting in the shadow which the world calls disgrace;

Whatever your sorrow, be faithful in the way you bear it, accept it from him, submit your heart to his encompassing care and, walking calmly forward, you will find that he is keeping step beside you.

CHAPTER TWO

YET A LITTLE WHILE

ONLY WAIT

Oft there comes a gentle whisper o'er me stealing,
When my trials or my burdens seem too great.
Like the sweet-voiced bells of evening, softly pealing,
It is saying to my spirit, "Only wait."
When I cannot understand my Father's leading,
And it seems to be but hard and cruel fate;
Still I hear that gentle whisper, ever pleading,
God is faithful, God is working, "Only wait."
When the promise seems to linger, long delaying
And I tremble lest perhaps it come too late,
Then I hear the gentle whisper, ever saying,
Tho' it tarry, it is coming, "Only wait."
Oh! how little soon will seem our hardest sorrow,
And how trifling is our present brief estate,
Could we see it in the light of Love's tomorrow,
Oh! how easy it would be for us to wait.

—*A. B. Simpson.*

CHAPTER TWO

YET A LITTLE WHILE

And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow.—ISAIAH 14: 3.

THE realization of the time limit on all our other trusts brings with it a keen pang; this money that we hold today, tomorrow may be gone; the endowments of talents, the influence of personality, the possibility of service, all are ours today, but the assurance of their swift and certain passing causes us to pause with regret that they cannot be ours forever. This trust of sorrow comes also with a limited tenure and in the deep shadows, we *rejoice,* as we are sure it *cannot* abide. This knowledge gives us hope in the dark hour, and strength for the struggle. The promise that sorrow and sighing shall flee away steadies the soul in the conflict; it cannot be for long; at most it is but for a little while. Those words of our Saviour are fraught with so much comfort,—

"A little while"—How often were those words on his lips!

"A little while and ye shall not see me,—and again a little while and ye shall see me; . . . and your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

We can bear anything for a brief time; this "little while" may be much shorter than we now suspect and we can be brave and patient in view of the promise.

"Grief," says Disraeli, "is the agony of an instant,—the indulgence of grief is the blunder of a life."

A child, some days ago on a street car, gave his seat to an old gray-headed scrub-woman, weary from her day's work. "O Sonny, I do hate to take your seat, but I'm so tired," she said, as panting for breath she sank into the proffered seat.

"That's all right," answered the boy, "I have such a little way to go."

The other passengers smiled at the pretty sight, and some determined to be helpful and courageous for the little way there is to go.

The degree of faithfulness depends not upon the amount of endowment; we can be faithful with a few things or a small thing, and the responsibility is equally great whether we are dowered with much or little. Faithfulness is the right attitude of our souls towards our trust, it is required of us all and the account is inevitable.

"How did you use that fortune?" is a soul-searching question, but much more awe-inspiring, the inquiry "How did you use the sorrow which was entrusted to you?"

Since we cannot evade an account, how best may we learn to be faithful in the testing time of a heart-breaking sorrow? We can be *patient*. Look not at your life in a detached day of trial, but rather think of it in long years, through every one of which God has been gracious and done what was really best for you. Assured of his goodness in the past, which you can now look back upon, trust him for the future, which today is dark. He will make it all right some day.

"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him."

The dutiful child does not ask "Why?" to any decree of his parents, and we owe to our Heavenly Father the same unquestioning obedience. Let no murmuring or rebellion find place in your heart.

Someone has recently written about the recitative relation so many good people seem to retain towards their sorrows, as if it were a duty they owe to misfortune. Talking to others about your sorrow only shadows them and does not help you; talking to God about it is the wise and unselfish way.

"We will be patient and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way."

Do not yield to the temptation which is sure to come, the self-absorption of sorrow. "Our unwillingness to burden others with our griefs will help us to bear them bravely and quietly. Self-sacrifice does not create insensibility to suffering, but it does give us strength to endure it with fortitude and even with cheerfulness." It shows no lack of tenderness for the one gone, but rather a wholesome faith, when the song comes back to the lips, so lately compressed in agony, and the talk goes on about the table. It is a sweet thing, too, when we do not leave out of our conversation the one who has passed on, but when tender reference is made to him as when he was in the circle. It is good to mention his name, to allude to his wishes and ideals, for indeed he still belongs to us and ours. The earthly living will be comforted and helped by the thought of the heavenly living, our beloved in the other world. Be, as Browning describes, "A happy-tempered bringer of the best out of the worst!"

We can be *calm*. It is possible for God's child to be so sincere in his fellowship with his Father, so eager in the kindly consideration for others, that his every influence, even the unconscious, will be helpful to those whom it touches. Perhaps when we reach Heaven there will be

more to greet us, won by our unconscious influence, than those whom we have tried hardest to reach. Earth is richer or poorer by just what we are, without regard to what we say or do. By the simple unconsciousness of our helpful service in a sorrow, rather than by any studied effort to aid, we may be a power to comfort others who may mourn.

Accept with calm confidence what you cannot now understand, remembering "What I do thou knowest not now but thou shall know hereafter."

"He only is rich," says Emerson, "who owns the day; and no one owns the day who allows it to be invaded with worry and fret and anxiety."

> "Allow no wave of mortal tumult to obliterate
> Thy soul's marmoreal calmness,—grief should be
> Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate,
> Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free;
> Strong to consume small troubles; to commend
> Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end."

The world looks on to see how consistent we are in such an hour. Do we give ourselves to an abandon of grief as those who have no hope? If so, we compromise our own profession and betray our Heavenly Father.

Ten years ago two foreigners, one a Hindu, investigating the coffee market, another a Chinese official, studying some phases of our government, happened to be walking together on Broad Street, near the old First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., when they noticed a funeral procession. Both expressed a desire to witness a Christian funeral, and after asking at the door of the church if it would be permissible, they entered reverently. They joined the cortege as it proceeded to Hollywood. While they stood looking at the open grave they heard the

mourners weeping and sobbing aloud in a way such as would befit a heathen funeral. Afterwards, the Hindu went to the study of the pastor, who had been seeking to lead him to accept the Christian faith, and said to the preacher, "Well, Doctor, there doesn't seem to be anything in your religion which comforts a man when his loved ones die; I saw your Christians mourn and faint at the grave and I had thought that your faith supported one in the last hour. I'm sure I do not want your religion. What is it better than Hinduism?"

We may honor him more in the way we bear a bereavement than in any other opportunity which may ever come to us. Christian, be careful how you behave in the hour of a great sorrow!

The sorrow has a time limit, but the blessing which it may bring will be eternal. "The Apollo Belvedere stands today a miracle of beauty, two thousand years after the chisel perished which gave it its immortal grace." The words of Dr. F. B. Meyer, lately passed from earth, linger in our memory: "Weeping can only stay for a brief summer night, and in the early dawn must hasten veiled away, because joy cometh in the morning, bringing the herald-beam of the long, happy summer day on which night can never fall or draw her dusky veil."

Compared with the future of bliss the longest life of suffering is only for an instant, and contrasted with "that weight of glory," our heaviest trials are light. If we look beyond the things which are seen, to the things which are eternal, we shall be able to endure. The conflict may be bitter but it is not for long, and the joy and peace beyond it are for eternity.

"Oh, for a faith to grasp heaven's bright forever,
Amid the shadow's of earth's little while!"

CHAPTER THREE

LOST SORROW

NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME

Not with them, Thomas, on that Easter night
When Jesus came
To bless his own, establishing by sight
His wondrous claim?

Nay, blame me not; I paid the price in ruth—
A week of doubt;
The ten rejoicing in the glorious truth,
And I, left out.

Not with them when he breathed the Holy Ghost?
How could you miss,
O Thomas, leader of a doubting host,
That heavenly kiss?

Deride me not, for evermore I must
This stigma bear—
Among the blessed who not seeing trust—
I was not there.

Ah, Thomas, teach me by thy loss to be
With those who pray
In full expectancy their Lord to see
On Easter day!

—*Ella Gilbert Ives.*

CHAPTER THREE

LOST SORROW

God meant it unto good.—GENESIS 50: 20.

IN the Pitti Palace at Florence two pictures hang side by side. One is of a stormy sea, with its wild billows and fierce lightnings, flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen, wearing an expression of despair, the feeble arms struggling in the waves. The other picture represents a sea tossed by as fierce a storm, with as dark clouds, and as vivid lightning; but out in the midst of the water a rock rises, against which the waters dash in vain. In a cleft of the rock a dove is seen sitting on her nest, quiet and undisturbed by the wild fury of the storm. The first picture fitly represents the soul struggling against sorrow, helpless and despairing; and the other, the Christian with sorrow no less severe, but in which he is kept in perfect peace because he rests trustfully in God's unchanging love.

Some of God's children are asking in their hearts, "Why must I suffer so if God really loves me?" The other day a distinguished lawyer, a Christian, said to his pastor: "My one little daughter was the joy of my life. Why did God take her, when I was trying so hard to live right and to serve him? This doesn't seem fair!" To try to answer that question would have been to attempt to speak for God. We do not know, but we may always say, as did that wise pastor, "God is making us, and he hasn't yet shown us his plan." If we but submit ourselves to

the Architect, who thinks in terms of the finished edifice, and do not rebel against the hammer and saw, one day we shall stand awe-inspired in his presence. "Michelangelo, as he hewed away at his block, would watch the chips fly under the heavy strokes of his mallet and chisel, and would say to the interested student who looked on, 'As the marble wastes, the image grows.' " A great many things need to be cut away from our lives so that the hidden beauty may be made visible to the world. Give God time.

"He spends a summer on a rose
That plays a simple role;
An age, upon each stream that flows,
Forever, on a soul."

To be afraid of the hard days and painful things is to forfeit the peace which may be ours, even in the days when the chiseling is being done. "Don't push from you the mysterious tool in the Divine Engraver's hand; it may be the very one by which he chisels out the finest tracery of the Christ-image in your shrinking soul. Thank God for heaven's compulsions which would not leave the deepest and best part of our natures alone." To struggle against it is futile; this never lightened a burden, or lessened a sorrow. We are forfeiting his peace this way. When did your own repinings profit or give you rest? To magnify our own bereavement is only to shut our hearts against his comfort. Others have sorrowed more bitterly than you, no matter what rends your heart. When we cherish our grief, dwell upon it, force it upon others, and refuse even for an hour to divert our minds from it, we are shutting our hearts to heaven's comfort. There is a vast difference between consolation and comfort; the one comes from without, the other from above. The world may console

us, but only our Father can comfort. This means "with strength or fortitude," and he gives it to those who trust in him and do not resist in their hearts his loving discipline. This is the only way to real comfort and the peace which passeth understanding. Sorrow is a two-edged tool; it makes or mars, it "savoreth of life into life, or of death into death." It sweetens or embitters the heart, draws us closer to the Father or drives us from him. When your dark hour comes, *you* are the one who must determine how the sorrow will react upon you. Life will be hard for us if we make it so. It may hold sickness with its pain and depression; it may bring loss of money and consequent years of want; it may bring desertion of friends in whom we had trusted; it may bring death to our loved ones and loneliness and sorrow with it; it may bring certain other griefs; it is sure to bring some; how are we going to meet it?

There are just two ways possible,—rebellion and submission. Rebellion does not lessen the suffering but only increases our helplessness. It routs the ministering angel who stands longing to help us; it cuts us off from the companionship of the Father, and this is "Sorrow's crown of sorrow."

Submission is the other way. It is the triumph which comes when we lay our sorrowing soul at the Father's feet and accept what he sends, knowing that it must be best for us since it is his way, sure that one day it will all be made plain, with no bitterness and no questioning, but with serenity, saying, "Even so, Father, for thus it seemeth good in thy sight." Billows of peace will sweep over the soul thus trusting.

May it not be that there was no other way than this of bringing us to the best that is possible for us?

The other day a bird fancier put into a sunny window two young birds, a starling and a canary, in separate cages, side by side. The cages were identical, the sunshine came equally on the two. At once the starling began beating against the sides of his cage; he kept this up continuously and refused his food and drink. A cry of rebellious frenzy emerged all day from his cage. The canary seemed to eye with quiet wisdom his surroundings; he ate and drank and, mounting to the topmost perch, he swelled his tiny throat with his first effort at song. When the fancier came at evening to put the birds away for the night, he found the starling a brilliant, but battered and blood-stained mass of plumage, fluttering helplessly in the bottom of the cage. The canary was still swinging and singing, and had triumphed over his bars.

One of the saddest scriptures is, "They made me a keeper of vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

There are many losses in this world which may be estimated accurately, but the loss of a sorrow is the one which can never even be approximated.

Last autumn saw the greatest stock market agitation in many years; the sinking spell, to use the words of the reporter, was the most acute ever experienced in modern financial history. Multitudes, in and around the New York Exchange, and investors from all over the world, were eagerly awaiting the reaction of the market! Why? So many were bemoaning their lost investments; some, maybe, only the fortune made on the margin, others, perhaps, the savings of a lifetime; and chastened throngs throughout our country regret the loss of their moneyed investments. But how much greater the number who mourn for the "lost sorrows, which have swept through

our lives leaving no enrichment of soul because we have hardened our hearts under them."

It is a dreadful thing to thwart God's purpose, or to stand in the way of the Almighty. The sorrow he sent you to draw you closer to him, may have been in vain. There are many who have been made hard and bitter and paralyzed for good work because they are weighed down by a vain sorrow. Pray that you may never hear the dreadful words, "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Someone has said that we are, under the shadow of a great sorrow, like shipwrecked crews, some of whom are driven by the danger and despair to their knees and others are driven to the spirit-casks. Take care that you do not waste or misuse your sorrow, and lose the beneficent consequences which might enrich your spiritual life! Each time the precious gifts of disappointment, pain, ill-health, loneliness, or grief, come into our daily lives, let us see to it that they draw us nearer to the Father, and make us more eager for those lasting riches of the Spirit, rather than for the vanishing joys of earth.

Life's most perfect vision comes often through "the telescope of a tear." Unless we rise from a sick-bed more grateful to God for a new lease on life, more sympathetic for other sufferers, and more eager to be about our Father's business, we have suffered in vain. If we stand beside the quiet form of our beloved and do not have kindled within us sympathy for every other mourning heart, and are not awed with gratitude for the companionship, which has ended on earth, and for the assurance of its renewal in heaven, and have not submission to the compassionate love of our Saviour, then this sorrow will be lost. When we walk to the open grave, and let the lilies, with their

resurrection promise, lie neglected at our feet and fail to see Hope's rainbow, and close our hearts to his peace, oh! then we have lost this sorrow. What looks to us now like black disaster, will under his guidance result for us in a stronger faith, a more enduring patience, and a tenderer sympathy. This very sorrow, which pierces your heart today, may be God's way of sparing you a greater.

A mother wept, her baby dead,—
A sad-eyed woman near her said,
"Death sometimes surest solace gives,
I weep, alas! a child who lives."

There is a difference between discipline and punishment; our physical and mental sufferings will take on a benignance if we remember them as training rather than penalty. A murderer is punished for the crime which he has already committed; a child is disciplined for the good he may do in the future. Our Father knows when we need the lesson; he also knows that for us there is no calamity greater than that of forgetting God, and his discipline is needed to help us remember.

"A lost sorrow is a solemn testimony against us, that God's means have failed to bring us nearer him." When we steel our hearts against his decrees, and by a rebellious spirit close forever to our own souls the door which opens upon a strength-giving service of sympathy and helpfulness to others, we have lost the priceless treasure. Somewhere in the barren and lonely future our souls will cry out, "Oh that I had been willing in the day of his power!"

Oh, holden eyes and slow of faith,
Ye miss the vision and the call!
When up ye climb on Sorrow's path
Lose not the *glory* of it all!

CHAPTER FOUR

ALL YE WHO SUFFER

NATURE AND FAITH

We wept—'twas Nature wept—but Faith
Can pierce beyond the gloom of death,
And in yon world so fair and bright
Behold thee in refulgent light!
We miss thee here, yet Faith would rather
Know thou art with thy heavenly Father.
Nature sees the body dead—
Faith beholds the spirit fled;
Nature stops at Jordan's tide—
Faith beholds the other side:
That but hears farewell, and sighs—
This, thy welcome in the skies;
Nature mourns a cruel blow—
Faith assures it is not so:
Nature never sees thee more—
Faith but sees thee gone before:
Nature tells a dismal story—
Faith has visions full of glory;
Nature views the change with sadness—
Faith can vision it with gladness;
Nature murmurs—Faith gives meekness,
Strength is perfected in weakness;
Nature writhes, and hates the rod—
Faith looks up and blesses God;
Sense looks downward—Faith above;
That sees harshness—this sees love.
But thou art gone! not lost, but flown;
Shall I ask thee back, my own?
Back to earth and sin?—nay, rather
Would I live in solitude!
I would not ask it if I could;
But patient wait the high decree,
That calls my spirit home to thee! —*Anon.*

CHAPTER FOUR

YE WHO SUFFER

Be still and know that I am God.—PSALM 46: 10.

CESSATION of pain is not the greatest blessing which our physical suffering may bring; and the side-lights which the pain itself throws upon the character of the sufferer may serve to bring into relief latent powers of unselfishness and some unused faculty of patience and sympathy which we should not possess had we suffered less.

The absence of pain does not mean the absence of danger, but in the physical world its presence is a sure indication of disease. What a blessing this symptom, which gives clue to the ailment! If we recognize and correctly interpret the signal, the pain will become bearable because it is understood, and because we appreciate the beneficent outcome. But in the spiritual world it is a sad mistake which imagines that sickness and suffering indicate lack of faith or consecration, and testify to God's displeasure. The record of humanity would be colorless indeed and without inspiration were it not adorned with the examples of those who have suffered well. How many of us have been comforted and strengthened because Bunyan had his sunless days of solitude in Bedford Jail! Shubert said that of all his music, the most tender and transporting was written in the hours of intense suffering. Many of God's children have to go on, as did Milton, with

life's work to do, "daylight denied," but he, blind, has sung to us of "Holy Light, offspring of Heaven's first-born!"

A great theologian has said that no one rightly suffers anywhere without contributing something to the alleviation of human grief, to the triumph of good over evil, of love over hate, of light over darkness. If you believe this could you not bear to suffer? The chief misery of all suffering is its loneliness and perhaps its apparent aimlessness. Dare to believe that no one liveth to himself and no one dieth to himself. Your patient acceptance of suffering may sweeten the lot and strengthen the life of some other who suffers near you. Only great souls know "How sublime a thing it is, To suffer and be strong."

Some years ago there died a woman who for thirty years had been confined to her room; in that time she never took a step, but was removed from her bed to her chair and back to bed again twice daily. Her body was distorted by rheumatism and her hands were twisted and misshapen until they had small resemblance to human hands. But she managed somehow to hold her pencil, and every day wrote a letter of cheer to a friend or to a stranger, who was suffering. She was never heard to complain of sleepless nights or days of pain, but we all knew, by her pinched face, how great a toll the physical suffering was taking. No one is able to compute the number of those she helped; some who visited her and felt the uplifting influence of her radiant personality; others, to whom she wrote, inspiriting the discouraged and sorrowing, even at a distance. When she lay sleeping at last, the smile still played across her pallid face and we all knew she had deserved the title so affectionately given by her friends, "Little Lady Sunshine."

Progress has been defined as increase in the capacity for suffering; we would be more patient if we could remember this truth. We are his workmanship, and everything which comes into our lives, if we trust in him, will serve to "perfect that which concerneth us." David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," and Paul, with a sincerity surpassed only by his tenderness, said of himself, "For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation." And for us all, he exclaimed, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

We should thank our Father for all these experiences, sorrowful though they may be, which will chasten the highest and holiest parts of our natures until they are beautified.

It is said that the superintendent of a hospital for the blind in England refuses to allow blindness to be called a misfortune, insisting that it is only a handicap. He is himself sightless and knows what will appeal to a blind man. During the recent war many of the wounds were in the head and there were many cases of blindness. Soldiers seem to suffer depression from this affliction more than from any other, but this brave Englishman knows how to help them. He does not call their wound an affliction or a misfortune, but a handicap which can be overcome by persistent effort and determination. The very name calls out all the best that is in the man, and he goes to conquer a physical handicap rather than a mental affliction. The difficulty is thus mastered by the new spirit which is instilled into the men.

Would not this attitude be a blessing in most of the hardships of life? "Our limitations are not the work of blind fate, but only handicaps which it is the will of our

Father that we should overcome in order to win a more glorious victory. By conquering them we conquer ourselves and attain a higher standard. They are steps by which we ascend toward the Father and the character which he wills that we should have."

"If you are an invalid, do your best to get well,—but if you must remain an invalid, still strive for the usefulness and serenity which are the best possessions of health. There are no sublimer victories than some that are won on sick beds."

The story is told of a Christian blacksmith, who had many sorrows and thus answered a skeptic, who challenged him to account for it; "I don't know that I can account for these things to your satisfaction, but I can to my own. Sometimes I take a piece of iron and bring it to white heat and strike it to see if it will take temper. Then I plunge it into water to change the temperature suddenly, and then again into the fire. Finally I put it on the anvil and with the hammer I make it into some useful article. If it will not take temper and respond to blows, I throw it into the scrap-heap. I have tried to bear the afflictions of my Father as patiently as I could, and every day I say to him 'Lord put me in the fire, if you will; put me in the water if you see I need it; do anything you think best, O Father, only for Christ's sake don't throw me onto the scrap-heap.' "

Perhaps the greatest spiritual force in a certain church today is a patient sufferer, who has been an invalid for twenty-five years. Converting her chamber of suffering into a veritable inner chamber, she prays daily for her pastor, her church, in all its activities, the helpless aged, the little children, the wayward, the unsaved, and from that upper room she wields a power through prayer, which may

count more mightily for the welfare of Zion than the activities of all the rest of us.

As this is being written there lies in the hospital a courageous young woman, who has endured bravely and cheerfully years of enforced seclusion. She was a professor of Latin in a great college of the South, and was popular and beloved by students and faculty. She was seized with sudden illness; a grave operation has been six times repeated in four years, and she has been an uncomplaining shut-in ever since. Deprived of continuing at her beloved task, she took up fancy sewing, and turns her handiwork into remuneration sufficient to continue her gifts to her church, to missions, and to her friends. These gifts go out in the daintiest of wrappings and ribbons, adorned with a blue bird, symbolizing the spirit of good cheer, which animates the gentle sufferer.

Another one of the Father's children had for four years borne tantalizing physical suffering; it became a dread of hers that she was going to lose her reason, and she begged a sister never to leave her, if her fear were realized. She said that she was willing to endure this blow, if it were God's way, but she was afraid of the darkness and the agony, which she thought it might bring. The Father mercifully spared her this sacrifice and she went Home with mind alert and brilliant to the end. When reason departs, unconsciousness of the situation comes, and the Father thus saves the sufferer from any sense of mental pain. Oh, anxious heart, do not worry about possible future sorrows; God is always better than we fear; you are in your Father's care, and he created your mind as well as your body and your soul; he will be there in your hour of need, and his compassionate love will be greater than any extremity. "My grace is sufficient for thee!"

Few pangs are so poignant as a keen sense of failure, or that which may look to our dim eyes as failure, and through this distress, if duly sanctified, "our being reaches its finest attributes." Dr. Waterman tells us that a large part of the campos of Central Brazil is burned at the end of the dry season, when it has failed to produce vegetation. Later when the rains come the plants there burst into foliage earlier than where there has been no fire, and flower where others are flowerless. There is short time, but great contrast, between the blackened forest and blossoming landscape. How often in God's vineyard where failure succeeded by apparent calamity has left a temporary trail of blackness and blight "there blossoms the pride of the garden!" Let the Father have his way!

An English woman, widowed suddenly in this country, without friends or money, and utterly distraught, sought the help of some Christians. "Can't I take it in my own hands," she asked, "end this mortal suffering, and go out to where my husband went, wherever that is?" "That is not the way to find your loved one, or your Father, and leads surely to blackness and despair," her friend urged; "it would be unworthy of your husband and ignoble in God's sight. Just trust in the Lord; wait patiently; do your very best with the task immediately before you, and the way will open plain ahead." Today she is in her own country, well, happily employed, and grateful that she did not follow her blind intent. O troubled souls, who may be tempted as she was, yield *never* to the sinful folly of "taking things in your hands." However dark the day may be, trust your soul to him, who can bring blessings out of disaster.

In a great cathedral in the old world there was a wondrous stained glass window. Visitors from over the world

came to look upon the splendor of the work of art. One day a storm shattered the window into numberless pieces. The people grieved over the ruin of their proudest possession. The fragments were gathered and placed in the cellar. Later a stranger came and when told of the fate of the window which he had traveled miles to see, asked for the shattered bits, which were readily given to him, as they appeared of no further use. Months passed and one day there came an invitation to the custodian of the cathedral. It was from an artist, noted for his skill in glass-craft, and asked the people to come to his studio to inspect a certain work of his genius. At a touch of his hand the veil was drawn aside and they looked upon the most wonderful window they had ever beheld. As they stood wondering at the beauty, the artist said, "This window I have made from the fragments of your shattered one, and now it is ready to be replaced." The cathedral thus possessed, instead of a stained glass window, a marvelous mosaic! Have your life plans been shattered? Maybe there will emerge from the catastrophe something more exquisite than ever you had dreamed.

Ugo Bassi has said that nowhere else but on this earth can we suffer for Christ. In that other life we shall love him, praise him and serve him through endless ages, but here is the only place and now is the only time for us to suffer for him. "The torch of the sufferer's courage has been passed on from generation to generation, and the flame is yet in nowise dim. You are ill? Misfortune, maybe, but maybe an honor too! You are chosen in your day to pass on the undimmed torch; you will not let its light flicker; men watch and God waits to see and help."

Through the ages Job has been an illustration of patient suffering. We have heard more about his physical

pain, but his mental torture must have been much greater; the loss of his property, the relentless hand of disease; the cynicism of his friends; the death of his children and the sarcasm of his wife, made a climatic sorrow which well might have overwhelmed him. In answer to the taunting words of her who should have comforted him, "Curse God and die," his silence gave to the world a lesson of the blessedness of enduring. "By reason of it we have learned two things which it would have been an unspeakable loss to have missed—the patience of Job, and the purpose of God!" The hosts of Heaven, God and Satan looked on while Job was thus tried; he little knew he was the spectacle of the universe, but he was faithful. God, Satan and man look on us; we may count on God's help, route Satan, and be a blessing to the ones who watch us!

Many of his best beloved children are bearing so heavy a weight of physical or mental pain that to the observer it seems the greatest blessing he could give them would be the immediate release from their sufferings. Have you in your inmost soul cried, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly"? What if there may be yet finer touches put on Sorrow's work of reproducing the Christlikeness in your soul? Are you not willing?

The physical pain we endure is not half so hard as the pangs of mental agony. Are you suffering the anguish of spirit which comes from a realization of another's sorrow or sin? Do you feel that one you love is in peril, not of body or limb, but rather of soul?

Some must sit, powerless to help and watch their child, when reason has been dethroned, or in the toils of an evil spirit. Many parents are today echoing the age-long lament of David's heart, "Would to God I had died for thee." Oh! troubled one, look up to your own Father;

he is the creator, and he is almighty; trust your child to him, sick of body, of mind, or of soul, and he will send a blessing greater than your heart knows how to ask.

"Our work is not done upon earth as long as God has anything for us to suffer; the greatest victories we shall win will be in endurance, in humility, in reliance, in trust."

The cry of man's anguish went up to God:
"Lord, take away pain;
The shadow that darkens the world thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the minds that would soar;
Lord, take away pain from the world thou hast made,
That it love thee the more!"

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world:
"Shall I take away pain
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart,
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price,
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives that would climb unto mine
The Christ on his Cross?"

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING

God never would send you the darkness
If he felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to his guiding hand
If the way were always bright,
And you would not care to walk by faith,
Could you always walk by sight.

'Tis true he has many an anguish
For your sorrowing heart to bear,
And many a cruel thorn-crown
For your aching head to wear;
He knows how few would reach heaven at all
If pain did not guide them there.

So he sends you the blinding darkness,
And the furnace of seven-fold heat;
'Tis the only way, believe me,
To keep you close to his feet;
For 'tis always so easy to wander
When our lives are glad and sweet.

Then nestle your hand in your Father's
And sing, if you can, as you go;
Your song may cheer someone behind you
Whose courage is sinking low;
Oh, well, if your lips do quiver—
The Father will love you the better so.

—*Anonymous.*

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

Are ye able to drink of this cup?—MATTHEW 20: 22.

HE is touched with the feeling of our infirmities"; he knows all about how to sympathize with us, but we can never know the extent to which he suffered. Those who have endured martyrdom may have approached the physical suffering of our Saviour; some of his saints may have felt the anguish of mind, which overwhelmed him, but only those who are forever lost can know the spiritual agony. That means eternal death, which is separation from God. Only in the physical and mental realms we may know, even in a small degree, "the fellowship of his suffering." "And none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, or how dark the night which the Lord went through, ere he found the sheep that was lost." When men say all manner of evil against us falsely, for his sake, we may come somewhat into the realm of his suffering, but only when it is falsely charged against us; if there is a vestige of truth in the testimony, we are exempt from the promise.

Many Christians in foreign lands are bearing in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. Recently the lone missionary from the "Woman's Field," as they call Shui Hing, China, told an audience in this country of her utter discouragement when her only colleague there died. No help was near her. A dreadful realization of her own weakness and helplessness, a terrible loneliness of soul

overwhelmed her, and for a time she must have known somewhat the "aloneness," which the Saviour felt in the Garden, when his disciples had fled. Help and light came to her as it always does to his child, when she surrendered her troubled soul to the Father's guidance; going bravely onward, she has done the impossible, and put to shame the rest of us who sit at home in ease, forgetting even to pray for them out there. They are faithful in the midst of persecution for him, even unto the giving up of their lives. These know more than we ever shall, the blessedness of the fellowship of his sufferings.

> "We are not so much as worthy to stoop down
> And kiss the sacred footprints of our Lord
> Upon the feet of any such an one
> As worketh patient there beneath his hand;
> Whom Christ has bound on his own cross to serve
> Beside him till himself shall give release."

Paul reminded Timothy that all who will live godly lives in Christ Jesus shall suffer. To the followers of our Lord he expressed the terms,—"Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

Some of us started on that journey, did not count the cost, lost courage, turned back, and so we forfeited the honor which might have come, of suffering in his service.

"He trod the winepress alone," but he is there when we must tread it. "I must suffer," said our Saviour, "and enter into my glory."—If that was the only way by which he could come to the crown, let not his child despair as his footsteps follow that lead. Whom God makes great he first appoints to struggle. "Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering." Christ participates in the sufferings of his people

borne for him,—he suffers with them, and the sorrows of his followers through all time are his. "In all our afflictions, he is afflicted." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" must ever after through his life have haunted the heart of Paul, as he remembered how thus the Saviour is identified with his child, bearing persecution for his sake. So for us as well as for Paul the aspect of our sorrows may be changed and "all struggling souls in this valley of weeping" may take comfort and courage, since our grief is his and our pain touches him.

"I *now* rejoice," said the apostle, but some of us may have had to let long years stretch between us and our sorrow before we could attain to that clear insight. "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake," said the Saviour, concerning one of those whom he delighted to honor; and he went readily to Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him, and the only glory he mentioned concerning himself was, "I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." His chief badge of honor was this, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He reminded the Philippians, the martyrs of the early church, "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake."

Paul weighed the sufferings of this present time against the glory of the future, and said they are not worthy of comparison. "The sufferings which we have to undergo in this phase of our career I count not worthy a thought in view of the dazzling splendor which one day will break through the clouds and dawn upon us."

The greatest honor which can come to any Christian is to be able and willing to pray the prayer, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the

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fellowship of his sufferings." The power of his resurrection means the power over sin, and its consequences, and the power over death, and its dread. To feel the power of his resurrection, it is first necessary that we should share his sufferings. No one can participate in his resurrection who has not participated in his death. The conformity with the sufferings of Christ implies not only endurance of persecution for his sake, but all pangs and afflictions undergone in the struggle against sin in ourselves, or in others. Are we burdened for a lost world, and touched with the feeling of its need? Perhaps it is when we are seeking to reach his dying children that, "He intercedes for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered?" Paul and Moses were willing to be accursed themselves for the sake of their people.

Does "the fellowship of his sufferings" imply that the sorrow of Gethsemane, as well as the agony of Calvary, could ever be reproduced, however faintly, in any faithful servant of Christ? Paul refers to it, not as a positive assurance, but as a modest hope.

"If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Paul is willing to share Christ's sacrificial pain to be able to share his victorious power. "Rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

The historical fact of the resurrection of Christ becomes to every real believer, an experimental fact. Paul, in his exaltation of spirit, desires to become conformed unto Christ's death, that he may be ready for the last and perfect sacrifice of Love.

Are we also able?

CHAPTER SIX

YOUR SOUL'S OPPORTUNITY

AMEN

I cannot say
Beneath the pressure of life's care today,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I had rather walk this rugged way,
If him it please.

I cannot feel
That all is well when darkening clouds conceal
The shining sun;
But then I know
God lives and loves; and say, since it is so,
"Thy will be done."

I cannot speak
In happy tones; the tear drops on my cheek
Show I am sad;
But I can speak
Of grace to suffer with submission meek,
Until made glad.

I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things to be,
When he is love.
But I can see
Tho' often dimly, through the mystery
His hand above!

I do not look
Upon the present, nor in Nature's book;
To read my fate;
But I do look
For promised blessings in God's Holy Book;
And I can wait.

I may not try
To keep the hot tears back—but hush that sigh,
'It might have been,'
And try to still
Each rising murmur, and to God's sweet will
Respond, "Amen!"

—*F. C. Browning.*

CHAPTER SIX

YOUR SOUL'S OPPORTUNITY

Let patience have her perfect work.—JAMES 1: 4.

A CHAPERONE for a party of college girls on a recent European trip tells how she missed some of her group just as they were entering the Bay of Naples. She sought them, and found them in the salon, absorbed in a game of bridge. She urged them to come at once on deck, that they might have the awe-inspiring view, but they refused, saying they were so interested in their game, and thus they missed one of the most impressive visions on earth.

In mythology, which reflects the beautiful vision of the Greek world, sorrow and pain are excluded. Christianity's most powerful appeal comes in the facing of sorrow, rising above the dark problems of life and "plucking the heart out of their mystery, and distilling from them the deepest peace. The Christian believes that sorrow and pain are not intruders from without, but companions of the spirit on its journey to God; divinely significant facts, to be faced with calmness, not to be ignored or denied, without evading their deepest and richest educational processes."

Your contribution to the world may be the courage and faith you manifest amid the shadows. This may be your great opportunity-time, and your Father is with you. Yours may be the spirit of one who is determined to transform what looks like a catastrophe into the gate

way of a more intimate touch with your Father, who has promised that you shall all be together again in a little while, and forever.

Your sorrow will dignify and ennoble your soul if you will permit it. In bearing faithfully a supreme sorrow, you will rise above the trifling annoyances, which irritate the soul of the weakling. Submit your life in its entirety to his healing touch, face splendidly an overwhelming grief, and earthly trivialities will vanish. You have prayed for strength, for sympathy, and for heavenly vision, and now do not cry out against the means by which these blessings can come into your life. Your Father knows that true happiness does not come from an immunity to sorrow, or even in a release from it, but rather in a victory over it, which alone brings peace, and the patience to wait for light in the darkness. Sorrow gives our souls a chance to be consoled and comforted; we are consoled when sorrow is alleviated; we are comforted when we are made strong in the midst of our sorrow and able to help another. Then only can we realize the promise, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

A three-fold blessing is promised to those who can receive its benediction; the growing strong with divine power, the ability to serve in an understanding ministry to others, and the coming into the secret place of the Most High; for sorrow furnishes us the supreme revelation of God. "Those know Christ best who know him as comforter, and love him most as the companion in their tears." "The Lord Jesus loves to reveal himself to those who dare to take the bleak side of the hill with him," said Spurgeon.

"In that divinely ordered experience of growth, which we call life," said Dr. Abbott, "these mysterious teachers,

sorrow and suffering, become our intimate companions on the heavenly way." If we remember in this period of growth that these teachers are educational, rather than punitive, we shall better learn the lesson which they impart. "There is no virtue in mere suffering; no goodness inherent in pain; the submission to the cross is its glory." Every sorrow, bravely borne, gives strength for succeeding victories.

Years ago a noted murder trial had been concluded, and the morning for passing sentence on the condemned man was at hand. The mother of the prisoner had come from far-away Texas to do her best to save the life of her only son. She had been by his side each day during the trial, but the kind-hearted judge asked a Christian woman to sit with her in her room at the humble boarding-house that morning and keep her from hearing the words of doom. The mother was old and poor, and had to hurry back to a dying husband. Instead of being a comfort and support to the mother in this terrible experience, the Christian stranger herself found comfort and strength in the wonderful fortitude of the sorrowing mother. With the quietness and poise of her faith,—she was a Quaker,—she said to her companion, "In this hour I am grateful to my Father for two things,—death in the electric chair is quick and painless, and he will not suffer. Then, too, I'm thankful my boy *knows* he must die, and will know the *day* and the *hour,* otherwise he might not have prepared for death! Long ago when he was a baby I offered this boy to the Lord,—it is a strange way he has taken him, but in heaven I will understand." The stranger went from the mother's presence, herself helped, and marveled at the inspiring example of triumphant faith in the face of crushing burdens.

Visitors at Cornwall, Conn., are shown a beautiful pine tree, which is growing in the cleft of a mighty rock. The seed took root in soil in the crevice, and rising above the rock, and throwing its roots around the sides, it has reached the earth and laid hold of its strength. The tree is as tall, as shapely, as beautiful as any in the vicinity of that enchanting drive on which it is the chief object of interest. Men marvel that nature has thus perfectly surmounted what looked like a hopeless obstacle, for the pine tree has so firmly entrenched itself around that rock, and into the soil beneath, that it is unmoved by the storms which sway its fellows. It stands a monument of encouragement to every passer-by, for thus the soul may surmount a great sorrow. Rise above your grief, stand triumphantly over its conquest and time's storms will not move you.

Life may seem to have lost its sweetness for you, in the passing of one you love, but rejoice that the possibility of service remains, and busy yourself in this privilege, which is alike the best panacea for your own sorrow, and the greatest opportunity for lessening the sorrow of another.

A short time ago a mother in the Far West wired across the continent to another Christian mother, "My daughter is desperately ill—the doctors give no hope—you believe in prayer, ask God to spare her. Tell him I can't bear this last terrible blow!" But she did survive the blow, which came as the third in a series of sorrows, and today she bears patient testimony to the Father's sustaining grace.

"Only weak natures," said Bishop Spaulding, "consent to dwell among the tombstones, and the losses of which they are the symbol; the strong drink wisdom and

courage from the cup of sorrow, and move onward toward Light and Life."

The soul which has sorrowed well can never again be narrow or selfish; this experience sweeps the mist of earthly things from our view and gives us a clearer vision of our Father; the deeper the sorrow, the nearer it brings us to the world of the Spirit. As you stood alone beside the quiet form of one whose welfare was dearer than life to you, in the darkness of that hour, when the voices of earth were hushed, did you not hear the whisper of God's love, feel the touch of his hand, and know the illumination of his presence and his power?

Thus, all along our journey Love is compensating for earthly losses. "Where death walks with insolent feet, life triumphs in exultant song; when earthly joy withers, heavenly hope blossoms in eternal beauty."

When we stand with our dear one at the portal of the other world, then only do we catch a vision of the eternal, and see that "when time wears out its vesture into threadbare decay, eternity robes herself in immortal splendor." In this view of eternity, when earthly values vanish, we are made strong to bear the daily burden, brave to face nobly other great sorrows, and able to be the cup of strength to some other soul in its crisis hour.

"If, when your trouble comes to you, instead of raging against it in complaints and deplorings, which, to say the best of them, are futile, you will stop and ask how you best may use the opportunity that has come to you; how you may keep your load from crushing others; how you may find surcease from your own sorrow in bearing the burdens of others; how the purifying influence of this suffering may make you gentler, kindlier, more helpful, more sympathetic,—then the scripture will be fulfilled in

you which says that 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope'; and you will come to see that your great sorrow was your soul's great opportunity."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GRACE OF THE UPLIFTED FACE

HE CHOSE YOU

He chose you not to bitter tears,
Though dark your life may seem;
He chose you not to foolish fears,
And not to sit and dream;
He chose you in his loving grace,
To action, patience, trust,
To show upon a *smiling face*
What God can do with dust.

—*Anon.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GRACE OF THE UPLIFTED FACE

Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot.—JOB 11: 15.

THERE is a lesson in the Bible about the uplifted face. The reference found in the book of Job, is extremely beautiful as a figure of speech, and at the same time expressive of certain facts in religious experience. It expresses the attitude of a soul at peace with God. Confidence is implied in this utterance, for a man without peace and trust will hang his head with guilt and shame, not lift it up without spot. It would be well for us to cultivate more the grace of the uplifted face, the look of trust and confidence in our heavenly Father."

Harriet Martineau once said to a Christian, "If I believed in immortality as you profess to do, I am sure I should not be troubled with any fear or worried with any earthly burdens. I think it would be all sunlight and joy, if I believed in eternal things, in the resurrection and a life beyond in which all things will be made right." This is a rebuke to many of us, who, in the midst of life's disappointments and sorrows go about with sad countenances and downcast spirits.

You recall the description by J. M. Barrie of how his mother, Margaret Ogilvy, got her beautiful face. A sudden summons had called her to her lad who was ill away from home. "She had bidden us at home goodbye with that fighting face, then my father came out of the telegraph office and said huskily 'He's gone.' I know my mother

forever now. That is how she got her soft face and her pathetic ways and her large charity, and why other mothers ran to her when they had lost a child."

Not long ago there passed away in Virginia a very beautiful Christian character. She had known all the joys of wealth and social prominence. Within a short time she buried her brother, her mother, her husband, her only child, and her only grandson. Then we saw her wealth depart. About to leave her lovely home, she sat in the midst of the furniture which was packed and ready for removal, and she said to the faithful butler, who had been her loyal servant many years, "O William, when I look around me I feel as though I cannot bear this!" "Don't look *around* you, Miss Lottie. *Look up* and then you will be strong to stand it," answered the servant who knew the secret of endurance. She did "look up" and so radiant was her face, so steadfast her spirit in succeeding days that we all knew she "endured as seeing him who is invisible." One who had been her near neighbor in her fortunate days, knowing of her brave spirit in adversity, sent for her when sorrow came into her own home, and a lovely daughter, recently a bride, lay in the last quiet sleep. "How did you bear your sorrow? Tell me, my friend, that I may find the same help, for yours I know surpasses my own." She quietly said, as the peace of Heaven suffused her face, "I just brought my aching heart to him and cried,

> 'When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
> Oh! thou who changest not, abide with me.'"

In the poise of her daily life and the serenity of her spirit, her friends saw how truly the Father had answered her prayer. How many times are our friends unhelped and our Saviour disappointed when we turn to the world and

to him a rebellious face, closing our eyes against the stars, and in the darkness of our grief refusing to see the dawning day!

"Let your light so shine," has its most far reaching import in the night of sorrow, and the true light, if within the soul, is sure to show in the face of the child of God. In the Old Testament there is the story of a man who had been on the mountaintop. He had seen God face-to-face, and when he came down from that experience his face shone so that the people could scarcely look on him, but "Moses wist not that his face shone." It was the "unconscious radiance of a life which had yielded itself utterly to the will of the Father, and lost all thought of itself in doing its work." The New Testament has the counterpart of this story in the martyrdom of Stephen. At the climax of physical and mental agony, amid his persecutors, he kneeled down and cried in a loud voice, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge," and he fell asleep. But "all those that had sat in the council looking steadfastly on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Unconscious power, it was, in the day of sorrow, the shining spirit reflected in the shining face.

Not long ago a family in the South was stricken with sickness and death. They had little of this world's goods; a married daughter had gone, leaving a tiny baby whose father had not lived to see it; next, the head of the house, a stalwart man, went suddenly. There were left one son and the heart-broken woman, grieving over husband and daughter. Suddenly she was smitten with blindness and they took her to a specialist in a distant city. On the train, her son who sat facing her, was overcome with the sadness of his mother as she sat with bowed head, closed eyes and an anguish of spirit portrayed in her face. "That poor

little baby! Who will care for it, now that I am blind? Son, leave me alone awhile, I must shut out the world!" The son lowered the veil over her face and left her as she had asked. Half an hour later he slipped back to see if she needed him. The veil was pushed back, her uplifted face was possessed by a serenity and peace, and she was softly singing,

> "In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time!"

"O Mother, what has happened to make you so happy?" asked the son, as he stooped above her. "My boy, I have given myself completely to my Father. I can be blind if he wants me to, and I can bear all this sorrow, for he will help me, and I've promised him to do it with a brave heart!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

BLESSED COMPENSATIONS

COMPENSATION

The graves grow thicker, and life's ways more bare
As years on years go by;
Nay, thou hast more green gardens in thy care,
And more stars in thy sky!

Behind, hopes turned to grief, and joys to memories,
Are fading out of sight;
Before, pains changed to peace, and dreams to certainties,
Are glowing in God's light.

Few jubilees, few gladsome, festive hours,
Form landmarks for my way;
But heaven and earth, and saints and friends and flowers,
Are keeping Easter Day!

—*Anon.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

BLESSED COMPENSATIONS

The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory.—ROMANS 8: 18.

DIVINE love will compensate, even in this world, for every earthly loss, and the heart which calmly surveys the sorrow is sure, sooner or later, to see the blessing. "Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay for all his children suffer here." Succeeding days will bring renewed reassurances of this truth.

"It is not possible for us to have in this life any grief or misfortune that will not find in eternity such alleviation and compensation that we shall forget it absolutely, or cease, at any rate, to remember it with pain. Is it some physical defect, like deafness? Our ears will hear such wonderful things there that in the first hour we shall almost forget that we ever were deaf."

Nothing teaches as sorrow teaches the comparative values of earthly and eternal things. "Cologne's great spires pierce the sky, and will for centuries to come; but the scaffolding beneath which they grew and the tools which piled the marble toward the clouds will vanish in a day. So affliction is but for the moment; it passes away, but leaves an eternal blessing."

Sorrow rightly borne will keep us from feeling that we have lost everything or even the best things because we may have had to part with many of this world's joys and satisfactions. The great blessing of seeming calamity is

that it brings into our hearts a stronger faith, a more enduring patience and a tenderer sympathy. The recent verse of Marie Blake expresses this idea of compensations.

"Now Life comes toward you, proffering her gifts;
. . . . . .
And last, that fearsome chalice in whose depths
Darkles the blood-red wine of *Suffering*,
Refuse it not, beloved! In that draught
Lies deep enrichment for all coming years;
The heart to understand another's woe,
Patience to bear, and hope to conquer fears,
And that bright truth which else you could not know;
How tender earth becomes when seen through tears!"

The heart which has suffered nobly will never be afraid of Life, or what it can bring. It will stand unshaken amid the sorrows and will enable others knowing disappointment, disillusionment and pain to take heart and reach upward to the Father and so bring inspiration into their lives. It can never be afraid of Death or what it will bring. Having gone through the valley with a loved one and stood on the border of the unseen world, it will come back strong and unafraid, and delivered forever from the bondage of a life-time, the fear of Death.

Sorrow is the mightiest teacher of sympathy; in our own dark hours we send for those who have sorrowed, who can find the right word, and get close to us with the prayer that comforts. Like the heart-broken mother weeping over her dead child, we want, "not Gehazi, nor even Elisha's staff, but Elisha himself the man of God." The joy of being this "Cup of Strength to another soul" is known only to those who have had a similar grief. Oh, sad-hearted sufferer, there will issue out of this trial of yours, if you meet it bravely, a good to yourself and to others greater than you now can believe.

"God lets suffering and sorrow come to do their work. We sit in anguished silence and life takes on a new and solemn sacredness. We awake to find ourselves stripped of fortune and fame, and the riches of God become real as never before. We come face to face with baffled plans and blasted hopes only to have the veil of our blindness torn from our eyes and behold God's will with its blessedness of service. Lest we forget, God lets us come into that pathway of suffering where the things of the flesh that have been making us forget, are forced into the background and Jesus Christ becomes the true center of our lives. This is what suffering has meant to some of you, nor would you recall it—even if you could."

On the coldest nights it is said that the Aurora is brightest in the Northern heavens. Sir Walter Scott became the great man that he was, and realized the highest expression of his greatness only when adversity swept over him. "Look at that manuscript for a proof," said Ruskin, referring to Scott's "Woodstock," written in the maelstrom of adversity.

When we give our treasures up, think of them as a loan to God, for he will give them back.

> "Ye long, long dead, and ye of yesternight,
> Chieftains and bards and keepers of the sheep,
> By every cup of sorrow that you had,
> Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
> How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
> Homer his sight; David his little lad."

Dr. Jowett says that some of life's wonderful visions can be seen only from the windows which look out from the darkened chamber of grief. The first one is the window of Love, which shines upon the past, the days we lived together with our beloved, before bereavement came.

And the gracious view of this window of Love is that it reveals to us the lovely. All that was beautiful in the dear one shines out in the light. Beauties before unnoticed appear in retrospect. Many of us know this window and the gracious things which are unveiled for the comfort of the soul.

The second window is that of Faith and it opens out upon the present. We have the assurance, even in the broken and desolate hours, that God is awake and tenderly at work. We see life not as chaos but as order, not as mere happenings, blind issues of chance, but the working out for us of the plan of our Father.

The other window, that of Hope, unveils to the soul the prospect which brings exquisite comfort. It looks out upon the morrow and through this window we glimpse the Father's house of many mansions, and remembering his promise "Where I am there shall ye be also," we vision those we have "loved and lost awhile" as busy and happy, and we take heart in the assurance that soon we shall all be together again and forever.

Great sorrows, greatly borne, cleanse the heart of narrowness and selfishness and become the "softened pattern which memory weaves, which fits the peace of the mind, more intimately than any joy we ever had."

Someone has given us the illustration of a young Scotch girl, who, when taken ill in this country, knowing that she must die, begged to be carried back to her native land. On the homeward voyage she kept repeating, "Oh, for a glimpse o' the bonnie hills o' Scotland!" Before they were half across it became evident to those who were caring for her that she could not live to reach her native shore. One evening just at sunset they brought her on deck. The west was all aglow with light and for a few

moments she seemed to enjoy the scene. Someone asked her, "Is it not beautiful?" "Yes, but I'd rather see the hills o' Scotland." For a little while she closed her eyes and then opening them again, and with a look of unspeakable gladness on her face, she exclaimed, "I see them noo, in the glow, and aye, they're bonnie!" Then with a surprised look, she added, "I never kenned before that it was the hills o' Scotland where the prophet saw the horsemen and the chariots, but I see them all and we are nearly there!" Then closing her eyes, she was soon within the veil. Those beside her felt that it was not the hills of Scotland that she saw, but the Hills of Glory.

"Perhaps there are some fair hills toward which you are now looking, and for which you are now longing, and you may be thinking that life will be incomplete unless you reach them. What will it matter, if while you are eagerly looking, there shall burst upon your vision the King's Country, and the King himself comes forth to meet you, and to take you into that life where forever you shall walk with him in white, because you are found worthy?"

And when through tear-dimmed wondering eyes,
We look for solace and relief,
Be sure he walks in Spirit's guise
Up every stony hill of Grief.

CHAPTER NINE

THE NIGHT ALSO IS THINE

THROUGH THE DARKNESS

A way through the darkness
God will show,
If I lean on his love as I tremblingly go,
A way through the darkness
Tho' darkness appals,
Yet, the Saviour is heeding my pitiful calls.
A way through the darkness
So strange and new,
But my Shepherd is leading me tenderly through.

A way through the darkness,
Such a wonderful way,
Jehovah himself is my strength and my stay.
Yes, a way through the darkness
God will show,
For I lean on his love as I trustingly go.

—*Frances E. Russell.*

CHAPTER NINE

THE NIGHT ALSO IS THINE

I will make darkness light before them.—ISAIAH 42: 16.

THE "Blue Sky Room," at Hygeia Hospital, in Richmond, was made sacred by the last days of Miss Fannie Heck. I happened to call one morning, after she had spent a sleepless night, and the nurse was about to turn me back, when Miss Heck asked for me to come in just a minute, because she had found a new scripture. "Last night," she said, "I could not sleep; from my bed I looked out over the quiet city; it was dark, and only the stars were shining. The pain was no greater than usual, but sleep forsook me. I turned on the light, and opened my Bible at the seventy-fourth Psalm, and the sixteenth verse, 'The night also is thine.' I had not before read the verse, or if I had, the meaning was never apparent to me, and oh! it has so much comfort in it! Read it sometime when you can't sleep." That was the last time I ever saw her, but her "new verse" and her words have helped in many a lonely night-watch.

A great many things look dark to us now, but the night is sure to be followed by the day, and there will come a time when we shall no longer peer through the darkness, for we shall stand in the revealing light of his day. That light will shine back upon our past "and illumine every dark spot along the pathway over which we have come. In the light of eternity we shall clearly see."

Night nurses in hospitals tell numerous pathetic instances of patients who cannot sleep. The midnight hour finds many restless and wide awake. The period of lowest vitality is in the early morning hours, when the body is weak, and the mind often "shares the depression"; the loneliness of the hour brings terror to many a sufferer, and one woman who often "watched with sleepless eyes the laggard dawn" said to her nurse, "The verse which comforts me most in all the Bible is that blessed promise, 'There shall be no night there!' " If we could always remember that he is beside us in the night, even nearer than in the day, and that he never sleeps, we should at least be calm if we could not sleep.

> "O thou, unsleeping Friend! Why should I wake
> Troublesome thought to take
> For any strange tomorrow? In thy hand
> Day and night like flowers expand."

The story is told of a vessel in the St. Lawrence River, enveloped in a dense fog so heavy that the lights on board could penetrate only a few inches from the side of the ship. The passengers were huddled together in despair, and appealed to the mate to intercede with the captain, whom they could not find, to stop the vessel. The mate replied, "The fog does not extend very far up; the captain is at the mast-head, above the fog-line; he can see clearly and it is he who is directing the ship."

Even in the darkest hour we can be sure that our Father is directing us, and will in all the days that are to come. What may be around the headland of tomorrow, we do not know, but this we do know, that his sunshine will light us by the day, and his unmoving, mighty star will burn for our guidance in the night.

It is said that the wives of the fishermen along the Adriatic Sea have the custom of going to the seashore at night and singing a stanza of a familiar hymn. They listen until they hear, borne by the winds, another stanza of the same hymn, sung in answer to theirs, by their husbands, tossed by the gale. To the heart that listens in the dark there will always come songs of comfort and cheer, across the night and the intervening storm.

There passed away, not long ago, at ninety-five years of age, the oldest member of a church in the East. She had been unusually active of body and mind until two years before her death, when she became, by reason of a broken limb, a helpless cripple. She was also going blind, and when she realized the inevitable, she sent for her pastor and said, "Will you please ask God to make me willing to bear this for him? It means I shall never read my Bible again, and oh, I'm afraid I will not be brave in the dark!"

But so surely had she "hid the word in her heart," that she could quote all the promises from scripture and numerous comforting chapters entirely. There seemed no limit to the hymns she had memorized, and once she was heard to repeat a whole page from Young's *Night Thoughts*. Memory was truly her handmaiden during those days of blindness and multitudes who were cheered by her words will testify as to how brave she was in the dark.

Recently a Christian woman was in the hospital for what her doctors frankly told her was a desperate operation. Those who heard it can never forget her words as she was passing under the influence of the anesthetic. "O Father, I am going into the darkness of unconsciousness. I have held on to you as long as I can, now you must

hold on to me!" She lived only a few months longer, but those words have been repeated to many others who found comfort and steadiness in the hour when consciousness was temporarily eclipsed, or when they were passing into the last sleep. The dying words of Charles Kingsley give an insight to his beautiful life here and a glimpse of that into which he passed. "It is not an unknown country to which I am going, for Christ is there; it is not lonely now, for Christ is with me; it is not darkness to which I am going, for God is Light!"

"*Why* is the dark, Grandmother?" asked a little girl, as together the two watched the stars come out. "The dark is the time for us to rest and sleep after we have finished our work and play," answered the grandmother, "and God sends the darkness to make it easy for us to go to sleep." "Is it dark everywhere?" the child asked, and was told that the sun shone on the other side of the world while we slept. "O Grandmother, isn't it nice to think of other little girls just getting up as we are going to bed, and while it is dark here it is being morning over there? Is God in the dark, too?" she continued, and when assured that he was there just as when it is day, she added, as if to reassure her own timorous little heart, "The dark is God's way of saying the day is finished, isn't it, and at night when they turn out the light and close the door I won't mind a bit." The grandmother felt a thrill in her heart when she tucked the little one in that night, and such comfort came as she remembered again that the sun is shining on her others "over there." When God says the day is finished and the work and play are all over, as the door is closed on earthly voices and the light is turned out, "*we need not mind a bit.*"

"Yes, I have had, dear Lord, the day,
When at thy call I have the night,
Willingly I'll go and unafraid,
From light to dark, from dark to light."

Some years ago, a little boy was coming alone from the city through the densely wooded section known today as the serpentine drive through the campus of one of our Southern universities. It was a winter night and dark came early. The boy was driving a light wagon and had a lantern tied on the end of the shaft. The father went out to meet the child and walked far into the woods before he heard the creak of the wagon wheels. "Sonny Boy, is that you?" he called, and hurried on to climb up beside the boy on the wagon seat. "I sure am glad you came, Father; it was so dark. Bonnie and I didn't know where we were going, but we just followed the bright spot under the lantern, and when I heard a screech owl I knew you would be coming soon." . . . O little lad, now grown tall, and all you who are afraid and lonely, when things are dark around you, and voices of despair are sounding near, always remember how he said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Just follow the white spot of light before you and be sure your heavenly Father is coming to meet you!

CHAPTER TEN

THE GLORY OF THE MORNING

YESTERDAY'S GRIEF

The rain that fell a-yesterday is ruby on the roses,
  Silver on the poplar leaf, and gold on willow stem;
The grief that chanced a-yesterday is silver that encloses
  Holy loves where time and change shall never trouble them.

The rain that fell a-yesterday makes all the hillside glisten
  Coral on the laurel and beryl on the grass;
The grief that chanced a-yesterday has taught the soul to listen
  For whispers of eternity in all the winds that pass.

O faint-of-heart, storm-beaten, this rain will gleam tomorrow
  Flame within the columbine and jewels on the thorn,
Heaven in the forget-me-not; though sorrow now be sorrow,
  Yet sorrow shall be Glory in the magic of the Morn.

—*British Weekly.*

CHAPTER TEN

THE GLORY OF THE MORNING

When the morning was come Jesus stood on the shore.—JOHN 21: 4.

PAINTERS have always found inspiration in the sunset; and some of the greatest pictures are of the Evening and the Afterglow. The sunrise has all the wonderful colorings of the sunset, and the veil of darkness gradually vanishes and the marvelous tints come into the clearer light and soon are followed by the full day. To one who has kept an all-night vigil, there is compensation in the view of the morning sky, with dawn and daylight and sunrise and morning following in close succession. If morning is so beautiful on earth, how incomparable must be the Heavenly Morn! And what does morning mean for us here? The beginning of a new day in which we may serve and suffer. There it will be one of service, but suffering will be forever done. The Heavenly Morning will mean so much more to us than ever could its symbol here. And what will it bring? Well, it will bring understanding of all the unexplained things of earth. The dark and mysterious hours when we were baffled and could not see will be made clear in Morning's revealing light, earth's inequalities will all be adjusted and full knowledge will dispel the questionings of the past.

In one of the art galleries in Germany is a painting entitled "Cloudland." It hangs opposite the entrance and as the eye first falls upon it, it appears to be a view of the clouds, with nothing else visible. As one comes closer

to the canvas, there gradually appear angel faces, and when one stands directly beneath it, there smile down upon the beholder innumerable angel faces. Maybe our cloud when seen at closer range will show the heavenly host!

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

I think morning will bring service. Could we be happy not to do something for him up there to show our appreciation? Surely there will be some means to employ our hands and our hearts, but no earth-weariness will follow the service. We shall serve him and never be tired again.

Morning will bring joy. However great may have been the weight of sorrow down here, every memory of it will dissolve in the contemplation of the bliss which will be ours. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

It will bring satisfaction, and what is that? The full "gratification of all our needs and our desires, and contentment in the possession and enjoyment of them." On earth we may not have had sufficient things of body and mind and soul, but there we shall have enough, which means so much more, and now in the press of poverty or the longing of the Spirit comes the promise, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness."

Morning will bring praise. Not until we are in heaven shall we know how truly to praise him for his redemption and grace. We shall understand when we talk to him, face to face, how great is the debt which he paid and which we owe, and then we shall be able to speak out of our glad hearts in conformity to our gratitude.

Morning will bring love. The poor affections of earth from which no vicissitude of time has been able to separate us will be magnified and transformed into an absorbing

love, which can never grow dim or fail. We shall love perfectly for we shall know each other perfectly. Here, even those who have walked the nearest to us we have "seen through a glass darkly," but there "we shall see face to face" and utter knowledge of each other will become utter love—and the fulness of the knowledge of our Saviour will become a glorified love.

Morning will bring peace. Wars, within and without, have troubled our souls on earth,—lack of peace has spoiled many a day's work, and estranged countless hearts. But there we shall have peace, freedom from anything and everything which has harassed our souls; and we have the sure hope that there "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts."

Morning will bring re-union with loved ones. None is there who does not rejoice at this promise and all are heartened by it in the separation for a little while from the dearest and most needed companionships of earth,—

> "And when the lonely winter of our sorrow
> Has rounded out for us earth's changing year,—
> Oh! on that radiant morn those long-hushed voices
> Shall greet our listening ear!"

Morning will bring us life. This fitful existence we have known on earth cannot be compared to that full and glorious experience which will be our inheritance in Heaven,—life, abounding, all-satisfying, and never-ending. "There shall be no more death,—neither sorrow, nor crying—neither shall there be any more pain." Amos tells us that the "Lord turns the shadow of death into the morning." When God's children were wandering, worn by weariness and longing, the words of Moses which most swiftly helped and cheered them were when he reminded

them that "at even ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt,—and in the morning then shall ye see the glory of the Lord!" In the New Testament the passing of God's child from this world is never spoken of as death,—the figures are that of a journey, when Heaven is at the end,—a Home-going, where the Father's House awaits us; a setting sail, where we shall find that Jesus stands on the shore to welcome us!

Two little children in Germany, a girl of eight and a boy of six lost their mother, and were sent in the care of the steamship and railroad companies to their father in the new world. The younger one had been patient during the ocean voyage, but when they were transferred to the train by the emigrant officials in New York, and night was coming on, the child, weary and wanting his mother, began to weep. The sister, herself a child, but with the mother-heart enfolded the weeping boy in her arms, sang the soft German lullaby, with which their mother had put them to sleep each night, and whispered as she tucked the covers about the boy, "Go to sleep, now; this is the last night and when the morning comes we shall see Father!"

That is the comfort which supports us all on the "last night." We whose evening comes quickly on, are entranced with the "exquisite blending of the warm human affection, with the celestial comfort kindled on the sacred altar." With hushed spirits, we lay aside the labor of our hands and soon the twilight time will be past, and the evening and the morning shall become the eternal Day! Our eyes shall behold the Father,

And Oh! the Glory of the Morning!

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